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Welcome to the Defence for Children International (DCI) Newsletter

Foreword from the Executive Director of the IS, Ileana Bello

Dear friends, it seems incredible to believe it, but already five months have passed since I arrived at the IS. I can certainly say that now I really feel I am part of the movement. I have come to know names and faces and every day I am getting more familiar with the story and history of the movement from the inside.

The IS is going through a transition period, but this is not something new in our organisation, nor in any others. Until last month it was only Anna and myself in the office—with the never-ending support of Camille from the documentation centre—trying to juggle many tasks at the same time. Now we also have Aisha, our new advocacy officer who joined us on 3 May. Aisha is already fully integrated into the staff and activities of the IS.

This past month of April has been particularly significant for us. The Latin American movement, along with Anna from the IS and some DCI Latin American sections, attended the Crime Congress in Brazil. It was an enormous effort that was rewarded with positive results. The Congress was a key opportunity for the IS to meet more closely with the regional juvenile justice programme, providing a means to exchange opinions and experiences.

The month of May was marked by the launch of an international campaign for universal ratification of the two Optional Protocols to the CRC (on the sale of children, and children and armed conflict). This event took place on 25 May in New York on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the two protocols. DCI took part in this special event, presenting a speech during the civil society participation and preparing a press release. (The latter is posted on the homepage of our website: <http://www.defenceforchildren.org>)

In addition to these activities, the month of May was largely devoted to the preparation of activities for the May-June sessions of the CRC and the 14th session of the Human Rights Council. This time, with the support of Aisha, we are working to be more actively involved in the sessions and side-events and to raise awareness on juvenile justice issues.

Respectfully,
Ileana

Aisha (our new advocacy officer) introduces herself

Dear colleagues, I would like to take a moment to introduce myself. I was born in Rwanda and spent the first 10 years of my life there before going to live in France, where I studied international law and later focused on international human rights law.

Ever since I finished my master's studies, I have been working in the field of human rights, first as an intern for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and later with the International Federation for Human Rights and the International Catholic Child Bureau.



Aisha introduces herself (continued from page 1)

My specialization and personal interest are in the rights of the child. Children's rights are violated on a massive scale worldwide. By reaching out and working together, we can strengthen child rights protection and ensure that children can grow up with dignity.

In working with DCI, I hope to learn and develop my knowledge of the issues so that a few years from now I will be able to translate my skills and experience into real improvements in the lives of children at the grassroots level.

Please feel free to contact me via email at the following address: advocacy@dc-i.org.

I look forward to getting to know you better and to working with you.

Best wishes,
 Aisha Rahamatali



Aisha Rahamatali

The IS meets with Pippo and Gabriella of DCI-Italy by Ileana Bello, Executive Director

In early April, Ileana paid her first visit to the Italian section of DCI. The office is headquartered in a one-room space very close to the ancient Roman door of San Giovanni.

The section is very much involved in the issue of child migrants and is implementing projects with the support of EU and Italian government funds. Among other initiatives, the section is wrapping up a project called "Contextus" (www.contextus.org), which provides training and information to employees of centres

hosting asylum seekers and to individuals working in the region. DCI-Italy created an online resource centre where much of the information is recorded.

The other project that is being implemented is "Core standards for guardians: closing a protection gap", a European initiative to strengthen the protection of unaccompanied minors. The project is financed by EU (Daphne) funds and is coordinated by DCI-Holland in cooperation with Belgium, Ireland, Germany, Denmark and Slovenia.



Pippo (DCI-Italy), Ileana (DCI-IS) and Gabriella (DCI-Italy)

www.defenceforchildren.org

Website of DCI-Italy:

www.defenceforchildren.it



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Children's International Conference in Palestine (10-11 November 2010)

The international conference "Protective Environment - Active Participation" will be held on 10 and 11 November in Bethlehem (Palestinian Territories). The event is organised by DCI-Palestine and the International Secretariat in collaboration with the International Executive Council.

The objectives of the Conference are:

1. Providing a platform for experts and activists in the field of child rights to describe and share experiences and discuss the best ways to promote active child participation without affecting children's enjoyment of their right to protection.
2. Shedding light on the reality of child protection and their participation in their communities, as well as the obstacles that inhibit the achievement of active child participation.
3. Providing an opportunity to strengthen cooperation among institutions and local and international organizations active in the field of child rights.

The Conference aims to bring together children and adults from all around the world and to show how they can play an active role in expressing their concerns and changing their reality.

DCI sections will take part in this event and bring with them children (under 18) with an interest and experience in the proposed theme. The children will also be actively involved in the Conference.

Call for papers

DCI-Palestine calls upon experts and those interested in child rights from different disciplines to submit papers to be

discussed at the international conference "Protective Environment - Active Participation."

Submission

Abstracts of no more than 500 words must be submitted no later than 15 June 2010. Upon selection of abstracts, an invitation will be sent to submit the full papers. The selected papers will be printed out and published in the conference report. Presentations during the conference will be based on the selected papers.

Topics

The papers submitted to the conference should include thorough and objective analyses with special emphasis on the practice of creating a protective environment that ensures children's active participation in the life of the community. Papers based on practical experience will have preference. Topics should deal with one of the following themes:

1. The role of the school in teaching the values of child rights
2. The problems of children are social problems
3. Conflict between rights of protection and rights of participation
4. Children are the most vulnerable or bearer of rights

For more information, [click here](#) (website of DCI-Palestine)

News from DCI-Niger

DCI-Niger has forged a partnership with the Dutch organisation Aflatoun to train teachers and groups of students in primary schools on the child's right to education, with a particular focus on school and financial education.

The section has also received a contribution from the organisation Solidarité Laïque through its national local network for the training of teachers on children's rights in Tillabéri (a region in southwestern Niger, along the river).



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Great collaboration between the International Secretariat, the Latin American Regional Juvenile Justice Programme and National Sections

by Anna Volz, Juvenile Justice Programme Officer

Last April, I went on a mission to Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, to attend the 12th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and to participate to the “Latin American Seminar on Juvenile Justice” organized by DCI-Brazil (ANCED) in collaboration with DCI’s Latin American vice-presidency.



The DCI delegation enjoying dinner

You all received several newsletters in which we informed you of DCI’s lobbying and other activities during the congress. In this article, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to our great and hardworking colleagues of DCI’s Latin American sections and of the Latin American Regional Juvenile Justice Programme.

I had met some of them already, but it was the first time that we collaborated so closely, and I think that we all saw the interest and complementarities of joining efforts for the cause of juvenile justice.

I am sure that there will soon be new opportunities of collaboration between the International Secretariat and the sections or the regions, and that they will be as positive and successful as this one.

25 May 2010: A day to celebrate...but more can be done!

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and human rights experts called on all countries to ratify the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child by 2012 to protect children from armed conflict and sexual exploitation. A special launch event took place in New York on 25 May on the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the two optional protocols.

The Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict has to date been ratified by 132 out of the 192 UN member countries. The Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography has been ratified by 137 countries.

Speakers at the commemorative event underlined the importance of implementation. Avis Sri-Jayantha, DCI’s representa-

tive in New York, was counted among these speakers. The following is the text of Ms. Sri-Jayantha’s speech.



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DCI's Speech for the Launch of the Universal Ratification Campaign of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (New York, 25 May 2010)

Prepared by Virginia Murillo (DCI-Costa Rica) for Avis Sri-Javantha (DCI Representative at the UN in New York)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides us with the political, anthropological, social, and legal elements that serve to protect and guarantee the human rights of children and adolescents on the global level. Now in effect for 20 years, it's the most widely ratified international instrument of human rights in the whole world - emphasizing that children and adolescents represent a priority for the development of their countries, and that they should be protected and offered all the necessary conditions for them to enjoy and exercise their human rights.

In 2000, the endorsement of the two Optional Protocols to the CRC by the General Assembly of the United Nations constituted an important step toward combating all forms of abuse and exploitation of children and adolescents; complementing, in a very significant way, the generalities of the CRC that could be subject to the interpretations and/or particularities of individual countries.

The Optional Protocol on child participation in armed conflicts establishes the minimum age for mandatory conscription as 18 years old, and it demands that States do everything possible to prevent people below this age from directly participating in hostilities.

The Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography pays special attention to the criminalization of these grave violations, and underlines the necessity of raising greater public awareness and international cooperation in combating them.

One of the principal aspects to which we, as Defence for Children International (DCI), wish to draw attention, is that the interpretation of these Optional Protocols and their proper implementation must always be part of the CRC and, therefore, must be guided by the following governing principles: non-discrimination, participation, survival and development, and the child's best interest, as well as the principles of comprehensive protection, enforceability, and public interest, and all other general principles of human rights.

The other element we'd like to add is that the Optional Protocols permit us to go even further in the protection of children's rights, because they highlight a series of details in the face of broad, complex problems like abuse, sexual exploitation, and participation in armed conflict.

The Global Study on Violence against children and adolescents, presented to the international community in 2003 and currently led by Marta Santos Pais, the Special Representative for the monitoring of this study, underscores the fact that violence continues without cease - threatening the life, integrity, dignity, and human rights of children and adolescents around the globe.

This study discusses five atmospheres of socialization for this population: 1) the household and family; 2) the street and the community; 3) violence in the schools and other educational institutions; 4) violence in shelters and judicial institutions; and 5) violence in the workplace - all settings in which children and adolescents



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DCI's speech... (continued from page 5)

encounter violence and are exposed to extreme vulnerability. Likewise, the reports periodically presented by the different Rapporteurs of the United Nations about children in armed conflict, Sexual Exploitation, Contemporary Forms of Slavery, and Torture, among others, point to the alarming situations in which children and adolescents find themselves exposed and immersed.

Before this scenario and the ten years since the endorsement of the two Optional Protocols, it's necessary to strengthen efforts and alliances so that, without further delay, those States that haven't yet done so will immediately ratify them and thus guarantee and offer integral protection to the human rights of children and adolescents.

As DCI, we join in on these valuable efforts, commending the initiative and demonstrating all our support for the ratification of the Optional Protocols. We are now mobilizing our national sections and associated members in the 45 countries in which we have a direct presence, accompanying the actions taking place at international, regional, and national levels to combat all forms of violence against

children and adolescents.

We will link our efforts with those of other international NGOs making an impact so that governments ratify the Optional Protocols, aiming to give them the greatest possible visibility. More voices speaking up together will increase the importance of the action, and DCI is committed to unifying our work and energies to achieve a common purpose.

Actions involving advocacy and political impact, social mobilization, trainings, communication, conferences, manuals, and direct programs are some of the different initiatives that DCI seeks to encourage on a global level - and by means of which DCI, both as a global movement and with its individual members, will mobilize in order to contribute to making the celebration of the Optional Protocols a grand celebration indeed.

From this point forward, we reiterate our commitment to join you in this campaign for the ratification of the Optional Protocols of the CRC.

Thanks very much.

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Please note that the articles contained in this newsletter are the individual contributions of DCI's national sections and the International Secretariat, and as such do not constitute the official position of the IEC members or the movement as a whole.